Introduction

The first part of this issue is dedicated to Flusser's texts on the two photographers Ed Sommer (https://www.edsommer.com/) and Ulrich Mertens (https://www.visuelle-konzepte.de/). These texts are accompanied by twelve pictures of Ed Sommer – one of Flusser in Robion and eleven 'metaportraits', compositions enacting a dialog between the subject and his image – and fourteen pictures by Ulrich Mertens – twelve from the exhibition "Sans Horizon" (Marseille August 4, 1988) and two of students from the Photography Department at HSBI – University of Applied Sciences and Arts, in conversation with Vilém Flusser about his book *Towards a Philosophy of Photograph* (December 8, 1983). As Marc Lenot – who has put this inspiring dossier together – writes in his accompanying presentation, the main purpose was to introduce the readers of *Flusser Studies* to a series of texts that strangely enough were not published in *European Photography*[1] contextualizing their work and providing Flusser's German texts with translations in French, Portuguese and English[2]: besides "Ed Sommer: Dialogisches Fotografieren", "Fugues / Fugen" (on Sommer) and "Drunter und Drüber / Sens dessus dessou" (on Mertens). We also publish "Erfahrungsbericht - Testimony" a short personal testimony by Ulrich Mertens on his collaboration with Vilém Flusser.

The second part contains a series of contributions focusing among other things on the notions of gesture and game but also engaging with AI, legal matters and a personal connection that is probably unknown to most readers: the short letter exchange between Octavio Paz and Vilém Flusser.

Rainer Guldin's "Vilém Flusser: The Bald, Bearded and Bespectacled Pipe Smoking Philosopher" – that harks back to his other previous essays on Vilém Flusser's style[3] – deals with Flusser's idiosyncratic habit of self-presentation that he developed in the course of his life. The elements composing this specific look were a pipe, sometimes unlit, a full beard, possibly compensating for an early baldness, and one, occasionally, two pairs of glasses. Beard and baldness set the

[1] Asked why the text was not accepted (on the German version the word *abgelehnt* (rejected) has been written by hand at the top of the page) Andreas Müller-Pohle answered that he could not remember the reason (email communication by Marc Lenot).
[2] We have published the originals whenever possible and the translations separately in a single document.
[3] See ", ( ) , On Vilém Flusser's Idiosyncratic Use of Commas and Round Brackets", in *Flusser Studies 40*, (https://flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/flusser-and-punctuation.pdf), "A Modest Proposal for the Saponification of Fats. On the Role of Satire in Vilém Flusser's Work" in *Flusser Studies 36* (https://flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/guldin-saponification.pdf) and "Le style c'est l'homme même: Für ein fluides grenzüberschreitendes Denken", in *Flusser Studies 20* (https://flusserstudies.net/sites/www.flusserstudies.net/files/media/attachments/guldin-le-style-est-homme-meme.pdf).

stage for the mobile components – the pipe, the glasses and the hands – that Flusser used skilfully, together or on their own, using one hand holding a pipe or both to attract attention to a specific point, to signal a pause or to emphasize a sudden change in argumentation. Flusser's image of the 1980s and early1990s – the time when he became famous as the philosopher of communicology, technical images and telematics – is that of a thinker restlessly talking and gesticulating while manoeuvring his pipe from one hand to the other or his glasses from the nose to the forehead and back or that of the meditating philosopher slowly walking back and forth in front of his audience with his hands folded behind his back and a pair of glasses pushed up onto the forehead. The essay is accompanied by fifteen pictures illustrating the different phases of Flusser's public appearance.

Teymur Hajiyev's innovative "Playing Against the Program: Interval and De-Programming as Editing Practice" proposes a Flusserian reading of film editing as a privileged retrospective site at which the programmatic logic of the apparatus becomes legible and can be worked against. While Vilém Flusser's canonical account of the apparatus is grounded above all in the camera and in the production of technical images, this essay argues that the editing table constitutes a derivative or second-order apparatus-condition in which already programmed material becomes available for interruption, recombination, and reflective refusal. On this basis, the article develops the interval between shots as a minimal operator of de-programming: a threshold at which continuity ceases to function as a neutral solution and begins instead to reveal the pressure of the program itself.

In "Intersubjective Games: Vilém Flussers Dialogically Synthesized Technical Images", Van Orhari discusses Flusser's vision of a technical mediation of dialogue introduced in his *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, that is modelled after the re-combinatory play of chamber music and jazz improvisation. The essay develops this argument through a software proposal that meets the criteria for what would produce dialogically synthesized images, investigating adjacent questions of technically mediated intersubjectivity in the process.

In their thought provoking "Le jeu et son pouvoir subversif chez Debord, les situationnistes et chez Flusser / Play and Its Subversive Power in the Writings of Guy Debord, the Situationists and Vilém Flusser", Letizia Goretti and Marc Lenot explore the relationship between Guy Debord and Vilém Flusser and their approach to playing and games, in the light of the theories of Johan Huizinga and of Roger Caillois. Both the situationists and Flusser emphasized the creative dimension of game, their subversive power, and the profanation and the quest for freedom that they make possible. Contrary to the Situationists who focused on the notion of a collective game, for Flusser playing against the apparatus was more of an individual endeavour. Along with the essay

we also publish Flusser's "Mit dem Zufall gegen den Zufall spielen" (Playing with Chance Against Chance).[4]

In "A Flusserian Perspective on Legal Due Process" Marcus Lessa, Domício Proença Junior, Felipe Loureiro and Roberto Bartholo focus on the nature of due process from the standpoint of Vilém Flusser's philosophy of language expanding his distinction between dialogue and discourse. A fruitful realization of due process is contingent upon relational patterns that enable the pursuit of a commitment to truthfulness. The essay incorporates concepts from Franz Rosenzweig, Arnold Gehlen's and Martin Buber's anthropological philosophy.

In "A inteligência artificial como ficção teratológica. Imagem, imaginação técnicae criação em Vilém Flusser", Daniel Fraga de Castro and Wellington Lima Amorim examine generative artificial intelligence through Vilém Flusser's philosophy of language, imagination, and technics, proposing to understand it as teratological fiction. In contrast to approaches centred on machine autonomy or the possibility of artificial consciousness, they argue that generative AI should be interpreted as a modality of technical imagination produced through the objectification of human imagination in technical apparatuses. Methodologically, the study combines a historical reconstruction of the development of technics with an analysis of Flusser's concepts of language, translation, imagination, apparatus, and freedom, while engaging with Monster Studies to provide a philosophical account of monstrosity.

Mitrou, Yiannis' "From Subject to Project: Flusser, Lacan, and the AI Transformation of Being" explores the transformation of subjectivity by staging a dialogue between Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of the subject—understood as the subject of the unconscious – and Vilém Flusser's concept of *Projekt*, extending this dialogue into the contemporary landscape of artificial intelligence and technical images. Read together, these two frameworks unsettle the notion of autonomous subjectivity, recasting agency as mediated, contingent, and structurally constrained. Through examples drawn from generative AI and machine vision, the paper argues that these images engage in processes analogous to unconscious formation, projecting imaginaries and shaping psychical structures.

In "Physics and metaphysics of the apparatus: Mapping and contextualizing the concept in Flusser's published work" Dimitris Gkinosatis examines the concept of the apparatus in Vilém

[4] There are several versions of this text. We publish "Mit dem Zufall gegen den Zufall spielen" from the catalogue of the exhibition at the Wilhelm Haack Museum in Ludwigshafen am Rhein from January 18 to March 15, 1992: *Zufall als Prinzip. Spielwelt, Methode und System in der Kunst der 20. Jahrhunderts* ([Heidelberg, Braus, 1992: 9-13). The text was also published in "Der Wiesbadener. Das Magazin für Kultur und Lebensfreude" (Wiesbaden, nº 23, Winter 1991, pp. 44–46) and in the catalogue of the 1993 John Cage exhibition at the Theater, Stadthalle Gütersloh (Marienfeld, Rhode Druck, 1992, pp. 30–31).

Flusser's published corpus, focusing on its philosophical scope, conceptual development and ontological implications. Rather than treating the term as homogeneous or self-evident, the paper approaches it as a shifting conceptual formation. It concentrates on four textual loci through which the concept's successive determinations can be identified: "Le vivant et l'artificiel", *Towards a philosophy of photography*, *Into the universe of technical images* and *Gestures*. These textual loci make it possible to trace successive levels of Flusser's conceptualization: its general metaphysical substratum, its specific ontological determinations, as well as its expansions through information theory, thermodynamics and cybernetics.

Darren Gary Berkland's "Flusser's Selfies" deals with the concept of gesture, through which Flusser tackles one of phenomenology's most challenging and enduring complexities: the body. Flusser demonstrates the body's place within phenomenology through the creation of a series of written self-portraits, in which the function and arrangement of perception operate in a mode most readily recognised in the contemporary media form known as the *selfie*. These selfie-essays do not simply articulate the place of a body within the phenomenological method but also provide detailed methodological consideration of how the body is articulated in perception and how its movements arrange perception. The paper also engages with the phenomenological work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.

In "Die Geste des Streamens. Ein ironisch-kritischer Kommentar Vilém Flusser zum 106. Geburtstag" ("The Gesture of Streaming. An Ironical and Critical Commentray to Vilém Flusser's the 106th Anniversary), Yannik Stevens seeks to extend Flusser's phenomenology of gestures into the digital platform age. The text argues that streaming fundamentally alters the relationship between users and media. Whereas previous media cultures were structured by ownership and material possession, digital platforms increasingly privilege temporary access and permanent availability. Music, films, and books are no longer collected and preserved but can be encountered within continuous streams of information. As a consequence, cultural consumption becomes detached from responsibility, care, and lasting commitment. The gesture of streaming is thus characterized by fluidity and the perpetual search for meaning within a society where all media seem to be disposable and accessible at once.

Finally, in "La laberíntica historia del Diablo. Primera recepción de Flusser en México / The Labyrinthine History of the Devil. Flusser's First Reception in Mexico", Miguel Ángel Luna Vilchis and Miriam Sanabria Colín, explore some aspects of Flusser's relationship to Octavio Paz who on July 26, 1966 wrote a letter addressed to Vilém Flusser in which he mentioned *Língua e realidade* (Language and reality) and *A História do Diabo* (History of the Devil) through Celso Lafer. Flusser replied only about a year later, on October 1, 1967. Vilchis' and Colín's essay explores the

conceptual and biographical convergences that emerge from a comparison of Paz' *The Labyrinth of Solitude* and Flusser's *History of the Devil*, their the shared experience of exile and solitude and their common interest in Zen Buddhism. The two letters have been republished in this issue of *Flusser Studies* along with an English translation of Flusser's letter accompanied by a short post-scriptum.

The issue is rounded off by "0.1s Disrupted apparatus, Park Namsa's photographic experiment" a review of the work of the Korean photographer Park Namsa by Baruch Gottlieb. As Gottlieb writes in his review, "Park's photographs are the result of him setting up his smartphone to take sequential photographs while he throws the smartphone into the air. The motion of the smartphone is translated into painterly strokes in the colours of the environment where the photographic act takes place." Park's work can be seen as a comment on Stevens's, Berkland's and Orhari's contributions, the work of the two German photographers Ed Sommer and Ulrich Mertens, as well as on Goretti's and Lenot's essay and Flusser's text on chance.

Rainer Guldin, Lugano November 2026